

Alberta Approved Farmers' Markets

Program Guidelines

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1) Overview of the Alberta Approved Farmers' Market Program

The Alberta Approved Farmers' Market Program (the Program) creates an operational framework that provides direction and guidance to approved farmers' markets in Alberta. The Program requirements ensure that Alberta approved farmers' markets are meeting minimum operational requirements while individual markets are encouraged to set standards over and above the minimums by striving to incorporate industry best practices and in keeping with their established values.

The Program is administered by dedicated staff within the Local/Domestic Market Expansion Branch of Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development.

2) Definitions

1. In this Guideline,

- i) "AFFPA" means the Alberta Farm Fresh Producers Association, a membership-driven non-profit organization representing the interests of farm direct market growers;
- ii) "AFMA" means the Alberta Farmers' Market Association, a membership-driven, non-profit organization representing the interests of member markets, vendors, sponsors and other supportive organizations through advocacy, education, promotion and innovation;
- iii) "AHS" means Alberta Health Services, the provincial health authority responsible for health service delivery, including the enforcement of the Alberta *Public Health Act* and Food Regulation;
- iv) "AHW" means Alberta Health and Wellness, the Ministry responsible for setting health policy, including the development of the Alberta *Public Health Act* and Food Regulation;
- v) "Alberta approved farmers' market" means
 - (1) a food establishment whose proposed operation has been approved by the Minister responsible for agriculture as an approved farmers' market under the administration of that Minister's department and;
 - (2) a niche marketing channel which creates the opportunity for customers to buy Alberta grown food, crafts and homemade goods from the Alberta producer, crafter or entrepreneur. The resulting communication and sharing of information creates trust and builds a sense of community. The market is designed to become a destination and attraction which builds goodwill, sharing and community support reminiscent of the 'town square' of previous generations;
- vi) "ARD" means Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, the Ministry responsible for administering the approved farmers' market program;

- vii) “best practice” means the most efficient and effective way of accomplishing a task, based on repeatable procedures that have proven themselves over time for large numbers of people;
- viii) “CFIA” means the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, the federal agency mandated to safeguard Canada’s food supply and the plants and animals upon which safe and high-quality food depends;
- ix) “farmers’ market” means an Alberta approved farmers’ market;
- x) “guidelines” means these policies and protocols, as issued, changed or updated from time to time by ARD, under which the approved farmers’ markets operate;
- xi) “local” means products made, baked, grown and sold in Alberta by Alberta producers;
- xii) “market rules” means the rules as developed by farmers’ market management which describes the operational policies and procedures of the farmers’ market;
- xiii) “niche marketing channel” means a focused, targetable marketing channel, whose products are non-commodity and of which local foods and farmers’ markets are a component;
- xiv) “producer” means an entrepreneur who makes, bakes, or grows the products he/she sells;
- xv) “program” means the Alberta Approved Farmers’ Market Program;
- xvi) “public market” means a farmers’ market operating within Alberta that is not approved;
- xvii) “reduced profit” means, with reference to entities incorporated specifically for the purpose of operating an Approved Market, a corporation which either does not charge vendors more fees, rents, levies or other payments than are necessary to pay the corporation’s expenses, or a corporation which returns any excess fees, rents, levies and payments to full time vendors (less reasonable reserves for present and future operating and capital requirements), each year based on a formula which reimburses each full time vendor for their portion of the excess based on the amount they have each paid;
- xviii) “regulation” means a legal restriction put into law by a government authority;
- xix) “Sunnygirl” means the ARD trademarked logo of the Program.

3) History and Current State

1. History – 1970s

The Alberta Approved Farmers' Market Program began in 1973 as a result of requests from individuals interested in starting farmers' markets. Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD) organized the program to ensure minimum guidelines would be followed across the province by those markets choosing to be a part of the program.

The Sunnygirl logo was developed by ARD as the official logo of farmers' markets recognized under the approved government program.

Alberta Health gave special recognition in the Alberta *Public Health Act* Food Regulation to those markets approved by the Minister of Agriculture or his/her designate, allowing certain low risk foods to be produced in home kitchens.

Alberta Agriculture and Alberta Transportation worked together to develop the Sunnygirl logo highway sign. This road sign is used to identify only those towns with approved farmers' markets.

The Program began with 4 markets following the "Make It, Bake It, Grow It" philosophy.

2. Current State

There are currently over 100 approved farmers' markets in Alberta.

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development conducted a study in September 2008 to assess the value of the alternative agricultural markets in Alberta and to identify opportunities for growth. Since 2004 the average spending per visit to a farmers' market has increased from \$35 to \$45, a 30-per-cent increase well in excess of inflation. Approximately 60% of Alberta households shop at farmers' markets with annual spending at farmers' markets totaling \$449 per household. Currently, farmers' markets in Alberta have an estimated \$380 million in annual sales, up from \$233 million in 2004.

The Guidelines were reviewed in 2008/09. The process behind the Guideline review consisted of two phases: Phase I consisted of a series of 6 focus groups held across Alberta with a broad cross-section of stakeholders representing vendors, market managers, sponsors, AFMA, ARD, AHW and AHS. All stakeholders viewed the future of approved farmers' markets very positively and many predicted growth in the industry in both the number and size of markets. In Phase II, an Advisory Committee consisting of industry, association and government representatives met to consider the feedback from the focus groups. Recommendations were made to the Minister, Agriculture and Rural Development regarding the Program, the Guidelines and the Alberta Farmers' Market Association. These Guidelines are a result of that review.

4) Approved Farmers' Market Advisory Panel

1. Terms of Reference

i) Purpose

It was recommended within the Guideline review, that an Advisory Panel be convened by the Minister, Agriculture and Rural Development or his designate to provide input to the ARD Farmers' Market Specialist with regards to approval status for new applications and for existing markets and to update Program requirements and best practices.

This transitions the ownership of the Program from being solely government to being joint industry and government. It builds understanding of and commitment to the Program by all stakeholders.

ii) Panel Composition

Membership on the Advisory Panel consists of: ARD Farmers' Market Specialist (chair), one representative from AHW and 2 representatives from industry - one from AFMA and 1 additional representative from industry.

iii) Authority and Accountability

The Advisory Panel will review all new farmers' market applications and make recommendations with regards to granting approval status.

Recommendations to remove approval status can be made by the Review Panel at any time if a given market is viewed as not adhering to the Program requirements.

The Advisory Panel can recommend changes to the Program requirements.

ARD retains final decision making authority on all market approvals and program requirements.

5) Roles of Specific Stakeholders

1. Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development

- i) **Farmers' Market Specialist:** Responsible for the overall administration of the Alberta Approved Farmers' Market Program on behalf of the Minister, Agriculture and Rural Development. This includes, but is not limited to, leading the Farmers' Market Review Panel, conducting market visits, liaising with market sponsors, managers, vendors and customers by providing these stakeholders with information regarding the Program, liaising with other government departments in regards to legislation and regulations affecting farmers' markets and their vendors and sitting as an ex officio board member of AFMA.

Website: www.sunnygirl.ca

- ii) Regulatory Services Division: Responsible for inspecting and verifying the safe production of meat and meat products at provincially licensed meat facilities, as well as ensuring compliance to assigned legislation. The division is responsible for the administration of 14 statutes and 30 regulations, maintaining and enhancing public confidence by ensuring consistency and co-ordination through investigation and enforcement activities as required.

Website: www.agric.gov.ab.ca

2. Alberta Farmers' Market Association

The Alberta Farmers' Market Association (AFMA) provides direction and support to member markets, vendors, managers, boards and sponsors through advocacy, education, promotion and innovation. AFMA works in conjunction with the Farmers' Market Specialist to develop and deliver programming to farmers' market stakeholders and participates on the Approved Farmers' Market Advisory Panel. AFMA provides value to members through a variety of means which includes developing and delivering customer-focused marketing and branding strategies for Alberta Approved Farmers' Markets.

Website: www.albertamarkets.com

3. Alberta Farm Fresh Producers Association

The Alberta Farm Fresh Producers Association (AFFPA) is a voluntary membership, non-profit organization representing farm direct market growers selling directly to consumers via farmers' markets, U-Pick farms, and/or farm gate sales. Programming specific to farmers' market vendors is delivered in conjunction with the Farmers' Market Specialist and/or AFMA.

Website: www.albertafarmfresh.com

4. Alberta Health and Wellness

Alberta Health and Wellness (AHW) is responsible for setting health policy, including the development of the Alberta *Public Health Act* and Food Regulation. One AHW representative participates on the Approved Farmers' Market Advisory Panel and works closely with the Farmers' Market Specialist to develop industry-specific food safety training programs.

Website: www.health.alberta.ca

5. Alberta Health Services

Alberta Health Services (AHS) is the provincial health authority responsible for health service delivery, including the enforcement of the Alberta *Public Health Act* and Food Regulation. Representatives work closely with AHW and the Farmers' Market Specialist to develop industry-specific food safety training programs.

Website: www.albertahealthservices.ca

6. Canadian Food Inspection Agency

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is the federal agency mandated to safeguard Canada's food supply and the plants and animals upon which safe and high-quality food depends. The CFIA is responsible for the administration and enforcement of 15 Acts and their related regulations.

Website: www.inspection.gc.ca

6) Legislation/Regulations

It is the **vendor's responsibility** to ensure their products, practices and facilities meet legislative requirements. As acts and regulations are subject to change and interpretation, it is recommended that vendors consult the provincial and federal enforcement agencies to ensure compliance.

It is the **manager's responsibility** to have a general understanding of the legislation, to request proof of compliance whenever necessary and to refuse vendors the right to sell their products if they do not comply with the legislation.

Federal legislation and associated regulations can be found through the federal Department of Justice. Available online at: <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/index.html>.

Provincial legislation and associated regulations can be found through Alberta Queen's Printer. Available online at: <http://www.qp.gov.ab.ca/index.cfm>.

7) New Approved Farmers' Market Applications

Markets wishing to obtain approval under the Program must do the following:

1. Complete an ARD Approved Farmers' Market application form and demonstrate that the proposed market will meet the Guidelines as defined. Available online at www.sunnygirl.ca or by calling the Farmers' Market Specialist at 780-853-8223 (310-0000 for toll free access).
2. Provide proof of liability insurance for the market. In sponsored markets, the market may be covered under the sponsor's insurance or a separate policy may be required.
3. Provide a copy of the rules established for the operation of the market.
4. Contact the local public health inspector to discuss the proposed market.

Approved farmers' markets must operate on a non-profit basis. To achieve this, they may be **sponsored by:**

1. a not-for-profit community group or organization

2. a local Chamber of Commerce
3. a municipality
4. an agricultural society - *Agricultural Societies Act* (Alberta)

OR

incorporated specifically for the purpose of operating an Approved Market under the legislation of the:

1. *Societies Act* (Alberta)
2. *Cooperatives Act* (Alberta) as a new generation cooperative operating on a Reduced Profit basis.

Applications will be assessed by the Approved Farmers' Market Advisory Panel. A decision will be made within four to six weeks to grant or deny an application based on Program eligibility. The Farmers' Market Specialist will advise the applicant, the sponsor and the local public health inspector of the decision in writing.

8) Requirements for Farmers' Market Operations

During the review of the Approved Farmers' Market Guidelines in 2008-2009, it was determined that some operational practices are critical to the success of each market and to maintaining the integrity of approved farmers' markets throughout the province. Markets **must** comply with these requirements in order to receive and retain approval status. *Failure to attain and retain any of these requirements will result in the market losing its approval status immediately along with all the benefits that approval status brings.*

Requirement	Description
Annual Paperwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All annual paperwork must be received by ARD no later than January 31. Vendor forms will be sent out in the spring; other forms will be sent out by November 15. Forms are also available online at www.sunnygirl.ca.
Date, Time & Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seasonal markets must operate for a minimum of 2 consecutive hours per day and for at least 10 market days per season. Market approval is granted to a market with specific dates and time of operation as well as location. Approval must be granted by ARD in order to make changes to date, time or location.
Discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alberta approved farmers' markets are venues where discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Validated complaints will result in the immediate loss of market approval status.
Food Safety Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market managers must complete industry-specific food safety training in order to retain the Food Permit issued by Alberta Health Services – COMPULSORY for existing managers two years after introduction of training and within two years of becoming a manager for new managers.
Governance and Market Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Approved Market must operate under the direction of an advisory committee, if sponsored, or a board of directors, if specifically incorporated, who understand and support the goals of the Program. Membership on the advisory committee or the board of directors shall be defined within the rules of the sponsored farmers' market or applicable corporate documents. Non-profit markets established under the Societies Act must develop by-laws to govern the operation of the market. (sample by-laws available)
Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Markets must secure market liability insurance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$5 million liability recommended Insurance carrier must be advised of any date, time or location changes.
Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Markets, vendors, sponsors and other stakeholders must be fully aware of and compliant with all municipal, provincial and federal by-laws, legislation and regulations.

Manager Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market managers must complete Market Manager Training Levels I, II, and III offered by AFMA within 2 years of becoming a manager.
Market Changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ARD must be notified immediately for any changes to date, time or location of the market.
Market Operational Decision Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Markets have the authority and responsibility to make operational decisions at the local market level so as to balance vendor needs with customer demands, while ensuring compliance with these Guidelines.
Market Rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market rules are submitted for review upon request.
Sponsor's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market sponsors are actively involved in providing direction to the overall operation of the market. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> overseeing the operation of the approved farmers' market; helping establish the rules and processes of the approved farmers' market, ensuring vendors have meaningful input into the formulation of the operating rules and processes; assisting in the recruitment, selection and performance review of the market manager; advising on the remuneration of the market manager; encouraging and financially supporting yearly educational opportunities for the market manager so as to further his/her professional development; encouraging vendor participation on the market executive; ensuring records required by the Program to keep the market in good standing are maintained and submitted; ensuring accurate financial records are kept; ensuring the approved farmers' market adheres to all legislation and regulations and; ensuring the approved farmers' market is either insured or indemnified against liability. The sponsor is ultimately responsible for the activities of the approved farmers' market.
Vendors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved farmers' markets must operate with a minimum of 10 vendors averaged throughout the course of the market season.
What May/May Not Be Sold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Markets must maintain a minimum vendor split of 80/20 where 80% of the vendors sell Alberta products which they, a family member, a staff member or a member of a producer-owned cooperative or their staff have made, baked or grown. The remaining 20% of the products can be made up of out-of-province, resale or commercial products. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An annual average vendor calculation will be used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between 70/30 split and 80/20 split: market is given 1 year to improve to 80/20 split Below 70/30: immediate loss of market approval status Discouraged products: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Out of country products; Franchises, distributorships and home-based businesses which vend products not made, baked or grown in Alberta. Used, antique or flea market items are prohibited at any time. Validated complaints will result in immediate loss of approval status.

Who May Sell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preference must be granted to Alberta producers who make, bake, or grow their products. Validated complaints will result in immediate loss of approval status. • Canadian producers who make, bake or grow their products supplement the market mix with those products not available in Alberta. These vendors fall into the 20% category. • Vendors reselling products that directly compete with products sold by Alberta producers are only allowed if the Alberta producers can not meet customer demand. • Out-of-province products must be clearly labelled as to their province/country of origin.
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9) Best Practices for Alberta Approved Farmers' Markets

Best practices by definition are *the most efficient and effective way of accomplishing a task, based on repeatable procedures that have proven themselves over time for large numbers of people.* (Wikipedia) They are courses of action that a market should **strive** to achieve and may not be fully attainable immediately. Markets may strive to exceed these best practices and are encouraged to do so.

During the Guideline review completed in February 2009, the Advisory Committee representing vendors, markets, sponsors, and government recommended that markets would be more successful and sustainable if they strived to achieve industry best practices. The initial list of best practices was compiled from operational best practices already in place in Alberta as well as from other jurisdictions across North America. As new best practices are identified, the list will be updated by the Advisory Panel or the approved farmers' market program staff.

1. Best Practices for Farmers' Market Operations

Best Practice	Description
Business Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Markets that develop strategic business plans including budgets and human resource requirements, and review them on an annual basis are more successful at achieving their goals. (sample business plan available)
Education: Customer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful markets are actively involved in educating their customers on product availability and seasonality.
Education: Food Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful market managers understand and are able to enforce food safety requirements and best practices at the market as well as coach vendors on food safety protocols. • Successful market managers continuously update their food safety knowledge. • Vendors successfully complete industry-specific food safety training. • Sponsors and boards/advisory committees receive annual food safety updates. • A Public Health Inspector is invited to at least one meeting per year to update and discuss public health, food safety and legislation

	issues.
Education: Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market managers who participate in training to improve their skills are better able to meet the demands of the position and further the aims of the market. • An annual market manager training plan should be developed with the market manager and the Board/Committee President. • Training is encouraged and financially supported by the market board or market advisory committee, if the market is sponsored.
Education: Vendor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vendors who are encouraged to upgrade their skills and gain new skills in production, marketing and business techniques are more business-focused and successful.
Food Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Markets strive to have all food vendors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) successfully complete all required food safety training required for commercial food establishments and, b) produce their food products in commercial, permitted facilities.
Greening the market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a growing demand for environmentally sustainable practices. Markets that incorporate some of these best practices into their everyday operations are viewed as better corporate citizens. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encourage customers to bring their own shopping bags ○ Encourage the use of cloth bags or develop your own market cloth bag ○ Encourage customers to car pool to the market ○ Recycle whenever possible and have readily accessible recycle bins clearly labelled throughout the market
Governance and Market Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful markets are managed by a dedicated manager. (sample job description available) • A sponsored market is a sub-committee of the sponsoring organization and is governed by an advisory committee. A liaison from the sponsoring board of directors sits on the market advisory committee to maintain the link between the entities. • Non-profit markets are governed by a board of directors that is elected by the vendors at the annual general meeting. • By-laws are reviewed at least bi-annually and updated as needed. • Market boards take advantage of board training in order to work more effectively together to improve the market.
Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Markets secure market liability insurance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ \$5 million liability recommended by the Government of Alberta Risk Management and Insurance. • Individual vendors secure sufficient liability insurance.
Market Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Markets in a similar geographic area are more successful when they work collaboratively to resolve common issues and to provide a more complete shopping experience for their customers.
Market Finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Markets establish a bank account requiring two signatures for all transactions. Sponsored markets may use the sponsor's bank account. • All market expenses require an invoice/receipt and are paid by

	<p>cheque.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All market income is acknowledged with a formal receipt to the payee. • A market budget is developed and reviewed annually. • Financial records are maintained for all market revenue and expenses. • Financial records are audited annually.
Market Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful markets develop value statements to outline what the market, the vending community and the customers value in the market. This guides them in their decision making and maintains the integrity of the market.
Market Rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concrete, enforceable market rules address common issues and controversies that arise in the day-to-day activities of farmers' markets. (sample market rules available) • Using these guidelines as a framework, market rules are developed by the market board or advisory committee, approved by the vendors and enforced by the market manager. • Market rules are reviewed annually and updated as needed. • Market rules are distributed to all returning vendors prior to the market season and to all new vendors prior to selling at the market. • Market rules do not violate any portion of these guidelines.
Meetings: Annual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the market is a non-profit society, an annual general meeting (AGM) must be held within a specified time following the fiscal year end. The timeframe is laid out in the bylaws. (sample AGM agenda available) • Robert's Rules of Order are used to guide the meeting. They provide common rules and procedures for deliberation and debate in order to place the whole membership on the same footing and speaking the same language.
Meetings: Board/Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The market board or advisory committee should meet periodically throughout the year to resolve any issues and to set future direction for the market. • Robert's Rules of Order are used to guide the meeting.
Meetings: Vendor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one vendor meeting should be held per year. • Robert's Rules of Order are used to guide the meeting. • A Public Health Inspector is invited to one meeting per year to update and discuss public health, food safety and legislation issues.
Promotion & Advertising Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful markets develop and implement an annual promotion and advertising plan that details the target market, how consumer awareness will be built, and the mechanisms used to achieve this.
Signage: Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Markets clearly display signage identifying market hours and location. • The Sunnygirl logo, available for use by all approved markets, is a symbol differentiating approved markets from non-approved, public markets. Markets using the Sunnygirl logo in all signage will help build customer awareness of their market as part of the approved

	program.
Signage: Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All vendors display all product names and prices, ensuring that all products meet minimum labelling requirements as laid out in legislation.
Signage: Vendor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All vendors display signs or banners identifying their farm/business name and location.
Vendor Mix & Vendor Numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consumers visit markets primarily to purchase food products. A suggested vendor mix is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30% - Agricultural products 25% - Non-agricultural food products/value-added products 25% - Craft and artisan products & other non-food homemade and handcrafted products 20% - Other These percentages will change according to the season and the products available. Markets determine their optimal number of vendors in order to ensure product supply meets customer demand and in keeping with the 80/20 rule. Successful markets make vendor mix decisions based on their value statement.
Vendor Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selection decisions are made by a committee made up of vendors and the manager. Prospective and returning vendors complete an application form. (sample application form available) Application forms collect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact information Description of products being offered for sale Proof of liability insurance Documentation accompanying the application explains the decision making process and authority for accepting new vendors, decision making criteria and contact information. Successful markets develop a system of vendor inspection and certification.
What May/May Not Be Sold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Markets with a vendor split of 80/20 or better at every market where 80% of the vendors sell Alberta products which they, a family member or a staff member have made, baked or grown are differentiated from public markets outside the approved farmers' market system.

2. Best Practices for Starting a New Market

Best Practice	Description
Visioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New markets that take the time to bring together all the community stakeholders to determine the vision of the market in the community are viewed more positively as adding to the community and are more sustainable in the long term. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring together a team of advisors/partners to assess the

	<p>feasibility of starting a market in your community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assess the need and potential support for the market in the community ▪ Potential site analysis ▪ Potential customer base and target clientele ▪ Assess potential revenue and costs for the market; sources of funding; ▪ Assess potential vendor profitability ▪ Vendor recruitment → types wanted, where to find them, optimal vendor mix, etc. ▪ Determine optimum organizational structure considering all options – non-profit, sponsored, new generation cooperative, for-profit, etc.
Governance and Market Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial Board of Directors is formed to develop many of the following items and to oversee the operations of the market and ensure it is operating in such a way as to achieve the vision of the market <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Define market goals that will act as guideposts, keeping the market on the right path and which help to assess your progress ○ Market mission statement formed reflecting the market’s goals ○ Develop a business plan that includes budgets and human resource needs which is reviewed and updated annually (sample business plan available) ○ By-laws written to govern how the organization will operate (sample by-laws available) ○ Develop a manager’s job description (sample job description available), determine remuneration and recruit a manager
Record Keeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop record keeping systems so activities can be tracked and evaluated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop annual financial budgeting process and financial record keeping system ○ Develop vendor record keeping system for current, past and potential vendors ○ Develop vendor application form (sample application form available) • Develop a record keeping system for important correspondence, forms and conversations
Vendor Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively recruit vendors to round out the market mix and to keep up with changing customer demands. Need to have a core of dedicated producers who have products that will develop a loyal customer following. Agricultural and food products are the primary reason consumers shop at farmers’ markets.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Refer to: Best Practices for Farmers’ Market Operations once the new market is operational.</i> 	

10) Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who may start an Alberta approved farmers' market?

A proposed market must be Approved farmers' markets must operate on a non-profit basis. To achieve this, they may be **sponsored by**:

- a not-for-profit community group or organization
- a local Chamber of Commerce
- a municipality
- an agricultural society - *Agricultural Societies Act* (Alberta)

OR

incorporated specifically for the purpose of operating an Approved Market under the legislation of the:

- *Societies Act* (Alberta)
- *Cooperatives Act* (Alberta) as a new generation cooperative

2. How do I apply to have my market become an Alberta approved farmers' market?

An application must be completed in full and submitted to the Farmers' Market Specialist along with any accompanying documentation. The application is available online at www.sunnygirl.ca. All applications will be brought to the Approved Farmers' Market Advisory Panel for consideration. A written decision will be made within 4 - 6 weeks of submission.

3. What is the difference between a board of directors and an advisory committee?

When it comes to farmers' markets, these two terms are often used interchangeably but they really are two different things.

Board of Directors: When a farmers' market is organized as a non-profit society, it must be governed by a board of directors that is made up of a group of people chosen to govern the affairs of the farmers' market. Members of the board can be elected from the vendor ranks as well as include members from the business community outside the market. Outside membership adds a different perspective to the board, encourages collaboration with the business community and brings different skill sets to the board that may help to further the aims of the market. A non-profit society board of directors has annual reporting requirements to the Registrar of Corporations in order to retain their non-profit status.

Advisory Committee: When a farmers' market is sponsored by a non-profit community organization, the market is a sub-committee of the larger organization and is governed according to the by-laws of the parent organization. Quite often membership on the

advisory committee is determined by an election during a vendor meeting and looks very much like a board of directors as described above with the potential for outside involvement on the Committee. The main difference is the connection back to the sponsoring organization's board of directors: one of the members of the advisory committee should be a board member of the sponsoring organization and the advisory committee should report to the sponsor's board of directors at least annually. In some cases, the sponsoring organization handles the banking for the farmers' market, ensures the farmers' market meets its insurance requirements and assists with the attraction, retention and professional development of the market manager. The sponsoring organization is ultimately responsible for the activities of the farmers' market.

4. What is the minimum number of vendors my market needs in order to be an approved market?

Approved farmers' markets must operate with a minimum of 10 vendors, averaged over the course of the market season. Keep in mind that a critical mass of vendors selling a full range of Alberta made, baked and grown products is needed in order to attract a supportive customer base.

5. What is a reseller?

A reseller is a company or individual who purchases goods or services with the intention of reselling them at a profit.

6. I have a vendor who sells his own product but now he wants to supplement his product offering with product he has purchased. Would he fall into the 80% or the 20%?

It is important that you look at the primary business of the vendor when assessing your 80/20 mix. If you have a bison vendor for example who wants to supplement his product offering with some spices that complement his product, it is likely he is primarily selling the bison and so would fall into the 80%. If you have a baker who also sells Tupperware, the distinction may be less clear and it might be better to split the vendor 50/50 between the Food and Other categories.

The annual paperwork allows you to clearly identify all the products a vendor is selling.

If you are unsure about what category your vendors fall into, contact the Farmers' Market Specialist at 780-853-8223 (toll free: 310-0000).

7. I have a vendor who is cooperatively marketing with another Alberta producer. Do they fall into the 80% or the 20%?

Cooperative marketing arrangements fall into the 80% when all the parties are supplying Alberta product which they, a family member or a staff member have made, baked or grown. It is important that the actual vendor(s) are able to adequately represent all the members and answer any customer questions regarding production or processing as they arise at the market.

8. Is the actual producer required to be at the market on market day?

The 80/20 rule does allow for a staff member or family member to represent the actual producer, crafter or entrepreneur. It is important that anyone selling at the farmers'

market is able to answer customer questions regarding production or processing of the product and that they are empowered to make decisions regarding complaints.

It is the decision of each farmers' market board/committee to decide on how this sort of arrangement will be managed from a vending perspective.

9. Our market is very close to the Saskatchewan/British Columbia border and several of our vendors are producers from out-of-province. How does this impact our 80/20 calculation?

Any producers from out-of-province are considered OTHER and fall into your 20%. This is true even if these vendors are selling products which they, a family member or a staff member have made, baked or grown.

10. What is meant by a "storefront" and can I allow vendors who own storefronts?

A "storefront" is any retail operation outside of the farmers' market. It can include retail space in town as well as an on-farm store. Vendors with storefronts who make, bake or grow their products can be allowed into the farmers' market. We have many vendors who have on-farm stores who are still making, baking or growing all their products. Retail operations that resell others' products are discouraged from being a vendor at an approved farmers' market.

11. Can I allow a vendor who sells collectible coins, books, videos, stamps?

These items are allowed ONLY if they are new items. Used items or items previously owned by another individual are not allowed for sale or trade in an approved farmers' market at any time.

12. Can I allow a vendor who sells antique furniture or antique/estate jewelry?

Antiques of any kind are considered used items and are not allowed for sale or trade in an approved farmers' market.

13. What information must appear on a food label and where do I direct my vendors who have questions about their labels?

The information which must appear on a food label is:

- Common name of the product
- Net quantity
- Dealer identity and principal place of business
- List of ingredients in descending order of proportion
- Durable life date if product has shelf life of 90 days or less
- Allergen labelling
- Nutrition labelling - unless exempt
- Bilingual labelling – unless exempt

Refer to the *Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising*. Available online at:
<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/labeti/guide/toce.shtml>

Labelling questions should be directed to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Fair Labelling Practices Program. It is the vendor's responsibility to ensure the accuracy of the information that appears on their labels.

Edmonton office: 780-495-7023; Calgary office: 403-292-4650.

14. We have a market rule regarding labelling but I still have a vendor who brings food products without labels. Do I, as the market manager, have the right to stop him from selling?

The market manager has the right to refuse vendors the right to sell their products if they don't properly label their food products. You are not, however, responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the information on the label.

15. What information must appear on a textile (clothing) label?

Labels are required on all clothing as per the *Textile Labelling Act* and the Textile Labelling and Advertising Regulations. This is federal legislation enforced by the Competition Bureau of Canada. For more information, refer to the Guide to the Textile Labelling and Advertising Regulations. Available online at:
<http://www.cb-bc.gc.ca/eic/site/cb-bc.nsf/eng/01249.html>

There are also a number of online tools available at: <http://www.cb-bc.gc.ca>. Search under TOOLS on the left sidebar.

16. I have new food vendors come every year and I want to make sure they know and understand all the health rules. What do I do?

You have three options available to you:

1. Request that any new food vendors contact the public health inspector directly so that they may discuss how the product is processed/made, how the product is packaged, stored and transported to market, any sampling requirements, any licensing requirements, etc.
2. Request that a health inspector attend a vendor meeting before the market opens every year. New vendors will be given all the required information and returning vendors will receive an update on the requirements of the *Public Health Act* Food Regulation. This is a best practice and recommended for all markets.
3. Discuss with the new vendors what their products are and based upon information given to you by the public health inspector, discuss the health requirements for your market. If at any time you are unsure of the rules for a particular food product, contact your public health inspector or have the vendor contact him/her directly.

Keep in mind there are a number of resources available to you and your vendors with regards to food safety.

- Marketing Food Safely: Farm Direct Advantage is a publication available for sale through AFMA.
- There are annual and weekly food safety checklists available for managers and vendors at www.sunnygirl.ca.

You can never be too cautious when it comes to food safety. When in doubt, contact your public health inspector.

17. I thought the 80/20 rule was for the “market” but the market in Small Town says it is for each vendor’s table. What is the interpretation on this?

The 80/20 rule states: A minimum of 80% of the vendors must be selling Alberta product which they, a family member, a staff member or a member of a producer-owned cooperative or their staff have made, baked or grown. The annual calculation is done by looking at the products listed for each vendor.

18. We have some vendors who lower their prices to be just below other vendors. What do I do about this?

Price cutting can become a serious issue in a farmers’ market. Everyone wants to receive a fair price for their products and conflict often erupts when vendors perceive other vendors are price cutting. This is an internal issue which must be dealt with at the market level. Develop a rule and a process to deal with any undercutting complaints. Be tough on the issue, not on the people.

19. Is it a requirement to hire a manager to run the market?

You are not required to hire a market manager. There are other successful operational models for you to consider. However, your Board of Directors or Advisory Committee must appoint someone to be the main contact/site manager for ARD, the public health inspector, potential vendors, customers, etc. In addition, someone from the Board/Committee must complete all required Market Manager and Food Safety training so that there is someone on site who has completed this training.

20. Who is Sunnygirl? How do I get a copy of her? Are there any rules for using her?

Sunnygirl is the registered trademark/visual identity of the Alberta Approved Farmers’ Market Program. This trademark is owned by the Government of Alberta and is available for use by government, any approved farmers’ market and AFMA in their promotion of approved markets.

Copies are available by contacting Eileen Kotowich at 780-853-8223 or email: eileen.kotowich@gov.ab.ca

Because Sunnygirl is a registered trademark, there are some rules for using her:

- The logo exists in black and white or colour. Individual markets or other users of the logo must not alter the colours or type font.
- The logo must not be altered by changing graphics or adding screens.
- The logo must not be combined with other graphics.
- Avoid using the logo on a photographic image.

- Avoid printing the logo in black and white on a dark background.
- Avoid printing the logo in white on a light background.
- Avoid printing the logo on strongly texture backgrounds.

11) Templates

The following sample documents/templates are available upon request from the Farmers' Market Specialist or online at www.sunnygirl.ca. These are to be used by Boards/Committees and Market Managers to develop customized documents for their markets.

1. Annual General Meeting (AGM) agenda
2. Business plan
3. By-laws
4. Market manager job description
5. Market rules
6. Vendor application
7. Vendor committees
8. How to be a Vendor Information Sheet
9. How to Start a Market Information Sheet